THE THRONE OF CUPID

FRED MADISON MYERS.

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The Throne of Cupid

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An Operatic Comedy

By FRED MADISON MYERS

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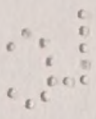

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CHARACTERS

Esther Darling, an heiress.

Geraldine Gushing, her friend.

Mabel Huntman, approaching thirty but not quite an old maid.

Reginald True, an Englishman.

Mr. Sheckles, an American business man.

Captain I. Kissem, alias Carl von Rival, a pirate

The Sissy Pilots, a group of effeminate males.

Liberty, a goddess.

Peace, a goddess.

Pirates, Young Men and Girls.

The Throne of Cupid

ACT I

This is the Land of Everyday;
The scene, a park on Sweetheart Bay.
Afar, where bay and ocean meet,
That fair domain of love's retreat,
The Isle of Honeymoon, is seen,
Resplendent with a magic sheen;
The same where Cupid's slaves resort
And Hymen holds his biased court.
Between the park and Honeymoon
An isle called Honey, one called Spoon,
Not far apart, lie near at hand,
Of easy access from the land;
In fact, so near a bridge of plank
Extends with ease from bank to bank,
O'er which the adolescent youth

(Or e'en some older ones, forsooth)
And budding womanhood can fare
Quite safely with a little care.
Off to one side and farther out,
With reefs and shoals around about,
And restless waters in between,
Is Money Island, dimly seen.
Within the park are rustic seats,
And floral bowers, and vined retreats;
Such nooks as loving hearts adore,
With shadows thick upon the floor,
Where Cupid's arts are softly wooed,
And prying eyes can not intrude;
While poised above on spreading wings,
The emerald-crested forest sings.
Upon the shore, on either hand,
Two unobtrusive figures stand,
Or, with a supernatural grace,
Glide silently from place to place.
Ah, some there are whose ignorance sees
But sunlight sifting through the trees,

Nor can behold the subtle grace
Those other eyes have learned to trace,
Who know these forms that flit about
Are goddesses beyond a doubt,
In whom the soul's unerring eyes
Peace *and* **Liberty** *recognize.*
Across the scene and in and out
Some gentle maidens move about,
In garb of various nations clad.
They hum with voices softly sweet,
And yet, withal, so sweetly sad
'Twould seem, almost, they but repeat
The sighing of the lonesome trees
At recollection of the breeze
That lately wooed their sylvan charms,
And held them trembling in his arms.
It is the hour when day is done,
But yet the night has not begun;
When Sol, resplendent in his best,
Makes merry ere he goes to rest;
When sordid facts put on disguise,

And things unseen materialize;
When all the vibrant ether teems—
On earth, in air, and up above—
With spirits from the land of dreams,
Unseen except by those in love.

Now **Esther, Mabel, Geraldine,**
In spirits fine, invade the scene.]

ESTHER

(*Joyously*)

Here we are, girls; yonder lies the bay.

GERALDINE

(*Gushingly*)

Beautiful Sweetheart Bay!
Now to be jolly and gay!

MABEL

(*Rather contemptuously, but with a touch of yearning in her voice*)

To me it's not so very clear
That we can have such fine times here.
But I suppose you youngsters do

Because the men make much of you.
No doubt it's sport—but then
I never could get used to men.

ESTHER

(*Teasingly*)

Were you to see them more, perhaps you might.

GERALDINE

(*Playfully, with roguish smile at Mabel*)

Oh, please don't tease poor Mabel; 'tisn't right.
It's not her fault she has no lover,
Or that the men have failed to hover
About, enticed by her maturer form,
As flies about molasses swarm.
Who knows what means she may have tried,
Ere this, to keep them by her side?

MABEL

(*With some heat*)

Oh, have your fun! Is age a crime?
At least I've not spent half my time
In chasing them, like some I know,

While trying to secure a beau.
There's Esther with two beaux too much—
One English and the other Dutch.
She surely is on pins and needles—
The way she shifts her smiles, and tweedles—
Because, to neither quite inclined,
She's at a loss to know her mind.

ESTHER

(*Goodnaturedly*)

Oh, terrible! Ha—Ha! But let it go;
We'll get to quarrelling ere we know.
Let's stop our nonsense. Any Jill
Can have a Jack or two at will.

TRIO—ESTHER, MABEL, GERALDINE, and CHORUS OF GIRLS

Esther.

Near at hand so we scarcely can miss it,
In the land that is called "Everyday",
Where the sunlight and moonlight may kiss it,
Is the romantic, fair Sweetheart Bay;

And we girls, though we'd like to explore it,
And it's treasure-filled isles make our own,
Are inclined to pretend to ignore it
Till our own special pilot is known.

Chorus.

In the Land of Everyday
Lies the mystic Sweetheart Bay;
Therein, new-weds to beguile,
The Honeymoon, enchanted isle;
Isle of treasure great and rare;
Isle of all the isles most fair;
Isle to which we'd sail away
Over magic Sweetheart Bay.

Mabel.

I've been told by some friends who have tried it,
That we'd sail on this bay to our grief,
In a love boat, unless there to guide it
Is a pilot who knows shoal and reef;

Who can steer past the quicksands of Honey,
And circle the shallows of Spoon;
Who can make a fair landing at Money,
And then strike a straight course to the Moon.

Geraldine.

So we're constantly seeking the pilot,
And to do so, the shore we must skirt;
Then, if we're not an unusually shy lot,
We'll meet some temptation to flirt.
And it's hardly worth while to resist it,
While the candidate pilots we sort;
For we'll surely regret having missed it,
When at length we arrive safe in port.

All.

In the Land of Everyday
Lies the mystic Sweetheart Bay;
Therein, new-weds to beguile,
The Honeymoon, enchanted isle;

Isle of treasure great and rare
Isle of all the isles most fair;
Isle to which we'd sail away
Over magic Sweetheart Bay.

[*The Chorus starts to hum once more,*
Perhaps more sadly than before.]

ESTHER

(*To Chorus*)

Oh, say, you girls! Pray stop it—do!
You give me shivers through and through.

[*As fades the light at close of day,*
The humming slowly dies away.]

Why such a sad strain, anyway—
Here on the shore of Sweetheart Bay?

MABEL

And such doleful faces, why?

GERALDINE

I'll bet that I can guess it.

ESTHER *and* **MABEL**

(*Together*)

Try.

GERALDINE

I will; for I've made a discovery
To make us feel sad past recovery.

ESTHER *and* **MABEL**

(*Together*)

Well?

GERALDINE

Can't you see? It's a disgrace!
There's not a man in all the place!

[*Esther and Mabel glance around,*
Surprised that not a man is found.]

ESTHER

Well! Well!

MABEL

Not one!

GERALDINE

Not even those
Who're always ready to propose—
Our sissy Pilots, always found
Where e'er a girl would have them 'round.

MABEL

Nor Esther's soldier-man—it's queer!

GERALDINE

It is. Nor is her sailor here.

CHORUS

(Sadly)

Yes, Sweetheart Bay is sad today
Because the men have gone away.
We fear they ne'er may come again,
Therefore we hum this sad refrain.

[*They start to hum*]

GERALDINE

(Impatiently)

Oh, stop it! You get on my nerves.
I can't see what purpose it serves.

[*Chorus stops humming*]

ESTHER

(To Chorus)

What has happened? What's the meaning of it all?
Why are the men not here as usual?

CHORUS

(Shaking their heads)

We cannot say what has transpired,
For we, as yet, have not inquired;
But this to us is very clear:
That not a single man is here.

GERALDINE

If not a single one, then pray,
Are all the married ones away?

CHORUS

The married men? Oh, such a question!
It carries such a wrong suggestion.

GERALDINE

No, no! Not so! You misconstrue
My words to mean what ne'er would do.
The place for married men, tis' clear,

[*Pointing toward Honeymoon Island*]

Is yonder with their wives, not here.
This park and bay belong to those
Who still in single bliss repose,
Yet who, with more or less desire,
Unto the married state aspire.

CHORUS

This park and bay belong to those, etc.

ESTHER

But why permit our thought to travel
Such a path? 'Twill not unravel

The tangle of a situation
That fills us all with consternation.

CHORUS

'Tis sad that those who could divert us,
The men we count on, should desert us.

GERALDINE

Who can explain it?

CHORUS

Who?

MABEL

The only proper thing to do
Is—

ESTHER and GERALDINE

(*Together*)

What?

CHORUS

Make haste and say.

MABEL

To explain and drive away
Or confirm our growing fear,

I suggest that we should hear
What Peace and Liberty can tell.

CHORUS

A fine suggestion! Aye, 'tis well
That to these guardians we should go
For explanation of our woe.

ESTHER

Why, that's as plain as an open door.
Why didn't we think of it before?

GERALDINE

(Throwing her arms about Mabel)

Ah, Mabel, you're a gem, a jewel!
Of course you're right—you always are.
How stupid we, to act the fool
While yonder stands our guiding star!
Liberty, at least, can shed
Enlightenment upon our dread;
Or means it naught, the brilliant light
That from her torch is shed at night?

CHORUS

To Peace and Liberty we'll go,
For one or both is sure to know
What attraction, show or fracas,
Has made the men all thus forsake us.

[*The cause of their distress to learn,*
To Peace and Liberty all turn.]

ESTHER

(*To Liberty*)

Spirit of Freedom, Guardian of the Shore,
Pray tell us why the men are here no more.
With thy Torch of Knowledge please illuminate
The gloom wherein we dwell. To us the reason state
Why we are left to pine upon the land, perhaps to perish,
By those false men, whom yet we love and cherish.

CHORUS

Explain! Make plain what dire event
Has thus for us our prospects rent.

LIBERTY

(*Holding aloft her torch*)

You all know
That this is so:
On yonder bay no girl can go
Unless some man has her in tow.
And this, too,
You know is true:
No man would dare to venture there
Without a lady in his care.

ESTHER, MABEL and GERALDINE

(*In concert*)

Yes; that we know.

CHORUS

All that we know.

LIBERTY

Note, then this truth:
Once, in his youth,
Sir Cupid, then a god of power,
Was tempted, in a reckless hour,

To risk his throne by casting stars—
As men throw dice—with Warrior Mars.
Mars won the bet.
And then and yet,
By the rash terms that then were made,
Sir Cupid god of love has staid,
And stays, by sufferance of man and maid.

CHORUS

(*With wonder*)

What's this? Could ought be stranger?
A god of love, his throne in danger!

LIBERTY

If one generation fail
To the Honeymoon to sail,
Man and maid, thus re-installing
Cupid in his lofty calling,
The god of love he'd cease to be.

CHORUS

Yes, yes; we see.

LIBERTY

Therefore, when Youth before the altar
Hesitates, and seems to falter;
When on Sweetheart Bay serene
There's scarce a young man to be seen,
'Tis sure that Mars has been renewing
His efforts for our god's undoing.

CHORUS

'Tis sad, 'tis cruel,
That we must suffer from this duel!

LIBERTY

Both Peace and I have seen, of late,
Mars' emissaries, Greed and Hate
And Envy, prowling round about;
And we, Sir Cupid's staunch adherents,
Trembled at their fierce appearance.

ESTHER

(*Aside to Geraldine and Mabel*)

What! When three vile dwarfs assemble,
That Peace and Liberty should tremble!

CHORUS

There's strife afoot when they're about.
Why did you fail to keep them out?

LIBERTY

What's that you say?
It could not be done.
With Inspiration gone away,
They were three to one;
For Peace, though expert at persuasion,
Is useless quite on such occasion.
These dwarfs, though sneaking, mean and small,
Are wily, quick, and strong, withal.

MABEL

Have these, then, lured the men away?

CHORUS

Oh, tell us, pray; will our men return or stay?

LIBERTY

Who can foretell what grave disaster
Hate may bring forth to please his master,
With Greed and Envy to urge him on?

'Tis said they have begun a war
The like of which was ne'er before.

CHORUS

A war? Oh, woe! What carnage dire;
What severed ties; what hail of fire;
These words forever signify!
Oh, war! Oh, woe! Our hopes are shattered;
Our hearts are bruised; our sweethearts, scattered,
On battlefields to bleed and die!

PEACE

(*Extending her arms, palms down*)

Be quiet, friends. Allay your grief.
For this fell thing is past belief:
That evil spirits can conspire,
By any stress of sword or fire,
Thus easily to overthrow
The sure effects of Cupid's bow,
Or eventually to sever
Bonds that draw and bind forever
Man to maid, and maid to man,

When used as only Cupid can;
Bonds the Supreme One did bestow
On Cupid many years ago.

[*Comes from a distance, heard by all,*
Beating drum and trumpet call.
Peace *shrinks and trembles*
As though the sound had hurt;
All are startled, listening;
Liberty's *alert.*]

ESTHER

Ah, Peace, I fear that you dissemble;
Or why should such sound make you tremble?

MABEL

No, Esther; Peace has hardly stated
That this war will be abated;
Only that its end must be
Our Sir Cupid's victory.

[*The sound of trumpet and of drum,*
Heard again, has nearer come.

Geraldine *now runs aside to peer*
Intently where the view is clear.]

GERALDINE

(*Calling to the others after a moment*)

Oh, girls, our fears have ruled us
To such extent that sound has fooled us;
The thing we took for call to battle,
With clash of arms and cannonading,
Is but the foolish din and rattle
Of some old friends, this way parading.

ESTHER

Now don't be gay.

GERALDINE

It's as I say.

[*All but* **Peace** *and* **Liberty**
Now run toward **Geraldine**
To look where she is looking,
To see what she has seen.]

MABEL

Yes, Geraldine has spoken true,
For yonder I can see them, too.

[*The noise of drum and trumpet*
stop. They hear,
Instead, the sound of footsteps
drawing near.]

ESTHER

Those Sissy Pilots! Let them come,
And blow the trumpet, beat the drum!
Our grief to them we'll never tell,
But, as usual, greet them well.

GERALDINE

What difference if our worry be discerned,
As far as these, our sissies, are concerned?
That is, I think, beyond the question;
Yet Esther makes a good sugestion.

Ah, who can say what friends may try
To spend an hour on Sweetheart Bay—
To plead their cause, to say good-bye—
Before to war they go away?
They'll have enough to worry o'er;
'Tis ours to such to bring relief
From troubled care, nor make it more
By exhibition of our grief.
These friendly pilots will provide
Good practice in the tragic art
That with a joyous smile can hide
The anguish of a breaking heart.

MABEL

'Tis well! Let none seem sad.
Nor yet should any seem too glad
To see them, or—

GERALDINE

(Interrupting)

Hush! Hush! No more!

Quick! Scatter, and appear
As usual. They're here.

[*Now hastily they separate,*
And, grouped in twos and threes,
Some lolling on the benches, wait,
Some strolling 'neath the trees.
Soon **Esther, Mabel, Geraldine**
Exeunt through a bower of green.]

[*Enter* **Pilots** *foppishly attired,*
Each according to his nationality.
And at each side a toy sword,
Upon each head a military cap.
The one behind the leader beats a drum,
Another blows a trumpet while they march
Around the scene, then pause before a group
Of girls, and pausing, form in line, salute.]

LEADER OF PILOTS

Ladies, we salute you,
And make this explanation

Of our recent absence:
Each unto his nation,
In this grave hour of trouble,
Himself has freely offered.
Alas! None would accept
The services we proffered.

CHORUS OF PILOTS

Alas! None would accept
The services we proffered.

LEADER OF PILOTS

Though we would soldiers be,
As all can plainly see,
We are compelled, against our will,
To act the parts of pilots still.
But better ones no craft can steer,
Than we who stand before you here.
(*To his followers*)
Men, doff your caps;
[*They do so.*]
Draw swords! Salute!

[*They draw and raise their toy swords aloft,*
Then lower them with an elaborate bow.
The girls all laugh and clap their hands in glee.]

LEADER OF PILOTS

(*To the drummer*)

You, Courtwell, drum!

(*To the trumpeter*)

You, Holder, toot!

[*They do so badly.*]

Now all mark step.

Forward, march!

[*A time or two they march around,*
Then stop as once before.]

DIVERSION—PILOTS and GIRLS

Pilots.

We are pilots seeking service;
Naught can from a duty swerve us.
Please admire us.

[*They strut.*]

If desirous,

You may hire us,
And require us
Worthy credentials to show;
For no matter where the start is,
Any place that on the chart is,
Safely passing each and every danger, we can go.

Girls. (*With an over elaborate courtesy*)
Dear Sirs, we are pleased to meet you,
And thus we proceed to greet you,

[*The girls advance and shake hands loftily.*]

While we're waiting,
Hesitating,
And debating
Just what rating
Each in our service should take.
Pray stay till some inner vision
Prompts us as to what decision,
In regard to such a vital question, we should make.

[*Girls retire.*]

Pilots. (*Advancing*)

Yes, thank you; we will stay
To hear what you may say.
We certainly like to linger longer
Where such fair ones dilly-dally
With various idle speculations;
And verily find
Ourselves inclined
To pilot such a dutiful lot of beautiful maids.

Girls. (*Separating invitingly*)

You may demonstrate,
While you the verdict wait,
What you can do
To merit elevation to such high estate.

Pilots. (*Each taking a girl by the hand*)

To give full satisfaction,
Then, in action
Each of us will make attempt to show

That he is suited for the pilot
Of the craft he has in tow.

[*Pilots and girls dance out of the scene.*
Enter **Esther, Mabel and Geraldine.**]

QUARTET—ESTHER, MABEL, GERALDINE and MR. SHECKLES.

Geraldine.

It's quite disconcerting—
I'm filled with dismay;
Our prospects for flirting
Have all gone astray.

Esther.

The present's a nightmare;
The future's as bad.
For things are not right where
No men can be had.

Mabel.

Why all this complaining?
I'm older, forsooth,

Yet hope is remaining
While still I have youth.

Esther.

Ah, youth is a time of enchantment

Mabel.

The fairyland epoch of life.

Geraldine.

Each boy from the time of enpantment,
Begins his gay search for a wife.

[*Enter* **Sheckles.**]

Sheckles. (*As he enters*)

Each infantile lassie
Has notions quite classy,
And puts on long dresses as soon as she can.
With luring, shy glances
The boys she entrances,
The while she is learning to capture a man.

All.

Ah, youth is a time of enchantment, etc.

Sheckles.

Good evening, ladies; pleased to meet you.
Are you surprised to see me here?

Geraldine.

Surprised, perhaps; but glad to greet you,
Who seldom in our midst appear.

Sheckles.

Just so, Miss Gushing.
Busy, rushing—
Great transactions every day.
Though I've the mind to,
Time can't find to
Dally much on Sweetheart Bay.
Can't stop for dreaming—
Must be scheming

How to beat the money game;
For I must collar
Every dollar,
If I'd live up to my name.

[*Enter* **Girls, Pilots,** *and* **Men** *in military attire.*]

Geraldine. (*To* **Esther** *and* **Mabel**)

He is a broker.

Esther. (*To* **Mabel** *and* **Geraldine**)

He's quite a joker.

Mabel. (*To* **Esther** *and* **Geraldine**)

Why do you suppose he came?

Esther, Mabel, Geraldine.

To gather treasure
Must be pleasure,
When you live up to your name.

ENSEMBLE

SHECKLES	EST., MAB., GER.	CHORUS
Can't stop for dreaming—	He is a broker,	He lets no dreaming
Must be scheming	Quite a joker—	Stop his scheming;
How to beat the money game;	Why do you suppose he came?	He would beat the money game.
For I must collar	To gather treasure	He must collar
Every dollar,	Must be pleasure,	Every dollar,
If I'd live up to my name.	When you live up to your name.	Must this Mr. what's his name.

SONG—MR. SHECKLES and CHORUS

Sheckles.

Sheckles I'm called, and for sheckels I strive;
In sheckels I glory; by sheckels I thrive;

To sheckels I bow, and with sheckels I stand;
For sheckels make Sheckles a power in the land.

Chorus.

To Sheckles, the man, add sheckels of gold,
And who can foretell what the future will hold?

Sheckles.

A fine lot of sheckels I, Sheckles, have stored;
And sheckels make sheckels to add to the hoard.
But Sheckles, with all of his sheckels, needs more;
For Sheckles must furnish the sheckels for war.

Chorus.

This Sheckles has sheckels, but still he needs more;
He thinks he's expected to finance the war.

GERALDINE

Very fine, Mr. Sheckles; but is it quite true
That the nation for money is looking to you?

SHECKLES

That is hardly the case. The urgent need
Is to make war munitions with greatest speed.

Though a war is a bad, bad thing at best,
Still it does furnish chances to invest—
That's why I'm here. To help equip
The nation for the coming strife
And aid by her companionship
My worthy self, I seek a wife.
Who among you is possessed
Of largest fortune, looks the best,
And has an amiable disposition?
Who speaks for such a rare commission?

GERALDINE

(Ironically)

At least, Mr. Sheckles, your statement is honest;
And your specifications are certainly modest.

CHORUS

(Among themselves)

He seeks a rich wife,
A companion for life.

MABEL

(*Aside to the Girls*)

I'd stand no chance; my fortune is small.

ESTHER

(*Aside to* **Geraldine**)

He's handsome.

GERALDINE

(*Aside to* **Esther**)

Ah! His choice on you will fall.

SHECKLES

(*Looking at* **Esther**)

Will no one reply,
No one name the fair belle?
Well, one I espy
Whose appearance bids well.
[*He approaches* **Esther.**]

CHORUS

(*Among themselves*)

To Esther Darling, see, he goes.
No doubt he'll here and now propose.

GERALDINE

(*Rather pettishly to Chorus Girls*)

Were his requirements less,
You'd like the chance, I guess.

CHORUS GIRLS

(*Disdainfully*)

Oh, no! Not us!

CHORUS MEN

(*Smiling*)

It's funny.

CHORUS

Now we will see how money
To money can make love.

SONG—SHECKLES and CHORUS

Sheckles. (*To* **Esther**)

Fair maid, I am told
That your fortune is great;

Before you, behold
One who seeks such a mate.

[**Esther** *seems about to answer.*
Sheckles *checks her by a gesture.*]

No; wait! Not so quick,
Lest you make a mistake;
For know, you must stick,
If my offer you take.

Chorus.

Oh, yes; you must stick,
If his offer you take.

Sheckles.

Though I have some gold,
And more gold I require,
You ought to be told
What else I desire.

My wife should have pride
Of a dignified mold,

That would, at my side,
The name "Sheckles" uphold.

Chorus.

That would, at his side,
The name "Sheckles" uphold.

Sheckles.

Her mind should be keen,
And her instincts, refined;
Her temper, serene;
And her heart, true and kind.

With these there should go
Perfect bodily health,
That a Sheckles or so
We might add to our wealth.

Chorus.

That a Sheckles or so
They may add to their wealth.

ESTHER

Pray cease, Mr. Sheckles; you've said quite enough.
Though your purpose is fair, yet your method is rough.

GERALDINE

Their talk is tiresome. Let's away
To stroll a while along the bay.

[*Exeunt all but* **Esther** *and* **Sheckles.**]

SHECKLES

My offer, ill stated, I pray you, don't spurn;
For unto our mutual advantage 'twould turn.

ESTHER

The best laid plans quite often fail;
And, furthermore, I'm not for sale.
But grant the advantage to be real;
That you, yourself, make some appeal;
Yet still I feel compelled to say
I'll not be wooed in such a way.

[*Enter* **Carl von Rival** *and* **Reginald True;**
From opposite sides they come to view.

They meet at center stage, and there
They stand, and at each other glare.]

ESTHER

Here come two friends of mine, who cannot hope,
In ways financial, e'er with you to cope,
But who, though by the green-eyed monster cursed,
In amorous methods are some better versed.
Your education, so neglected
In ways of love, should be directed.
One of these friends I'll have impart
Instruction in the gentle art.

SHECKLES

(*Rather grouchily*)

You needn't bother.

ESTHER

But I will. You see,
A loveless marriage don't appeal to me;
And, yet, I like you—oh, enough to ask
A friend to undertake the task

Of teaching you that art above
All others—how to fall in love.
Herr Carl von Rival, there, can tell
It all—and tell it well;
Exactly how it should be done,
Just how a wife may best be won.
In fact, his scientiffic mind has fixed
In ordered sequence, details mixed
And multitudinous; has reduced love's law
To an unchanging formula.

[*To* **Rival** *and* **True**:]

You boys stop your glaring, and come over here,
Where to you I can talk without having the fear,
At each word that I utter, of straining a cord
Of my voice apparatus.

[*They come.*]

Now, can't you afford
To shake hands and be friends? Do be pleasant a while!
I dislike to converse with a man who can't smile.

[*Each puckers his face in design arabesque,*
That might pass for a smile of the genus Burlesque.]
There! That is much better. Now, let me present
Mr. Sheckles, a broker, with wealth like a Czar.
He has done me the honor, to ask my consent
To accept of his name and a place in his car.

RIVAL

(*Aside*)

Ach! The conceited moneybags! I wonder how he
stood.

TRUE

(*Aside*)

Proposed to her? Of course! At least, his taste was
good.

ESTHER

(*Continuing the introduction*)

Mr. Sheckles, Captain Carl von Rival,

[*They bow stifly.*]

And Sir Reginald True.

TRUE

(*Extending his hand to* **Sheckles**)

Mr. Sheckles—That the name? Ah, glad to meet you;
How do you do?
Rival, there, is half a cad—
I'm not that sort, ah! don't you know?
So let's be friends, although you add
Another string to Esther's bow.
It seems to me I've heard of you—
Ah, yes, 'tis true!
A scheme—financial; rather new—
Not long ago you carried through,
O'er which, at home, was much ado—
In circles where much riches go
As proof of brains—ah! don't you know?

SHECKLES

(*To* **True**)

Glad to know you. So you've heard
Of me? Upon my word,

I'm not surprised.
I have devised
So many schemes financial,
Wrought in detail circumstantial,
That, in this money-getting game,
"Sheckles" has become a name
To conjure with. If ever I can be
Of service to you, call on me.
Don't fail——

ESTHER

(*Interrupting*)

Oh, Mr. Sheckles! Please!

SHECKLES

(*Continuing,* **to True.**)

To come——

ESTHER

(*Interrupting*)

I say!
Stop talking business. Here, on Sweetheart Bay!

[*To* **Rival**:)

Now, Carl, a favor I shall ask;
I know you'll not refuse the task.

RIVAL

(*Gallantly*)

At your command, as always. I
One thing only could deny;
Nor that to you need I impart;
You'll find the answer in your heart.

ESTHER

(*With a courtesy*)

I think I understand. Now, the request I make
Is this: That Mr. Sheckles you will take
To some secluded spot, and there impart
The rudiments of the love-making art.
I think you'll find that he, as yet,
Don't even know the alphabet.

[*Both* **True** *and* **Rival** *look relieved.*

Then **Rival,** *not to be deceived,*

Assumes a look not quite so bland,
And twirls his mustache with his hand.
A quizical glance he gives to **True,**
And then looks **Esther** *through and through.*]

ESTHER

(*Nodding assent to* **Rival's** *unspoken question*)
Yes, Carl; that is it; that's exactly the thing
I desire.

RIVAL

On a single condition I'll give True his fling,
And retire.

ESTHER

And you say that condition is—?

RIVAL

That you refrain
From making rash promises unto this swain;
For a chance, at least equal, I wish to retain.

TRUE

Now, I declare!
That's hardly fair.

Some minutes more,
And off to war
I'll have to go.
I'd hoped, you know—

RIVAL

(*Interrupting*)

Therein we're alike, if alike in no more.
I, also, had hoped—

ESTHER

(*Interrupting*)

But you, too, go to war.

RIVAL

The time I can spend at your court
Is exceedingly short—

[*He looks at his watch.*]

Exactly ten minutes; then I must away.
One half of this time,
On condition just stated,
With Sheckles as student, I'll spend as you say,

O maiden sublime,
From your smile separated.

ESTHER

Very well, Carl; then let it be so.

RIVAL

Come on, Mr. Sheckles. Time's passing; we'll go.

[*Exeunt* **Rival** *and* **Sheckles.**]

ESTHER
(*To* **True**)

Now Regie, some favor, you'll grant, I have shown.
For fully five minutes the field is your own.
What have you to offer whereby my affections,
Divided and scattered in many directions,
Perhaps might be turned—oh, of course,
Toward yourself; and, a unified force,
Said affections, united, be lured from their play
In the byways of flirting, wherein they now stray,
To a dignified course down a single straight way?

TRUE

If your so-called affections are really divided,
If you smile upon more than one beau,
Yet are truly in love, then, it must be decided,
You're in love with yourself, don't you know?

ESTHER

With myself? Not at all;
But, perhaps, with you all.

TRUE

The heart where divided affections hold sway,
Knows no more of love than the night does of day.
Ah, would that I could, by some wonderful art,
Awaken the love still asleep in your heart!

ESTHER

I fear, Regie dear, that you make a mistake;
For Love, in my heart, if he isn't awake,
Is certainly not in sweet slumber reposing.
He is busily dreaming.

TRUE

Is his sleeping but seeming?

ESTHER

Perhaps he is dozing.

TRUE

Let him doze. You're awake;
And to you I shall make
My appeal.

SONG—TRUE

If the riches of earth I possessed,
And the wealth of the sea were mine;
If I had all the treasure, unguessed,
That is hidden behind the star-shine;
And all this I should offer to thee,
In a purse silver-spun by the moon,
Would it turn thy affection to me,
Make thy heart with my heart beat in tune?

Ah, an offer far greater I make,
Greater far in the wealth of the soul;

I offer a heart that's awake
With a love that's unsullied and whole.
Take, then, the best that is mine:
Take my heart—it beats only for thee;
Take my love—it is already thine;
Take my life, take my all—take me!

If I knew how to gather all sweets
From the flowers, like the honey bees;
And could capture the rapture that beats
In the songs of the birds in the trees;
And should weld these, for thee, in a strain
Harmonized with light-chords, multihued,
From the sunset's symphonic refrain—
Wouldst thou yield? Would thy heart be subdued?

Ah, an offer of music I bring,
Sweeter far to the ears of the soul;
The song that a true heart can sing
Of a love that's unsullied and whole.

Take, then, the best that is mine:
Take my heart—it beats only for thee;
Take my love—it is already thine;
Take my life, take my all—take me!

[**Von Rival,** *having entered during this refrain,*
Has lingered at a distance, smiling in disdain.]

RIVAL

(*Coming forward*)

Ha, ha, ha! O, valliant True!
Such wondrous things as you would do!
Your headlong rush
Through wordy slush
Of supersentimental gush
And bombast so inane,
But shows defect
Of intellect.
Yet, oh, the passionate effect
False hearts expect to gain!

[*Mimicking* **True**:]

Oh, take my love—
Because it's yours already yet;
Take me, my dove—
Because I'm all that you can get!

ESTHER

(*To* **Rival**)

What has become of Mr. Sheckles?
Why do you return alone?

RIVAL

He's growling o'er his recent lesson,
Like a dog that gnaws a bone.
For arts of Sweetheart Bay
He seems to have desire,
Yet finds, alas! that they
Much practice will require.
And yet, from what I overheard
Of all this mushy gush absurd,

As I came up, I am inclined
To think he's not so far behind.

[*To* **True**:]

Love is a science, young man,
A part of the science of life;
Without a methodical plan,
You'll never attain to a wife.
And love, though a science
Of human alliance,
That deals in poetics
And gentle esthetics,
Still has its immutable law.
There's nothing spasmodic,
Much less the chaotic.
Just take each essential
In order sequential—
This is the conclusion you'll draw:
When E is the woman, and T is the man,
And N is his need, you will see
That O is the orator, making appeal,
In over-much language, for what he might steal.

Work it out by the old Rule-of-three:
Then N is to E as T is to O,
And, according to rule, the answer is NO.

TRUE

(*Quietly, with suppressed anger*)

Herr Rival, I'm minded to talk very plain.
If my song, as you say, is absurd and inane,
This science of yours is but drivelling drool,
[*More incisively*:]
And the man who has stated it talks like a fool!

ESTHER

(*Laughing and playfully shaking her finger at them*)

You'd better stop. 'Twould be a shame,
By quarrelling, to spoil the game.
I am amused, for neither knows
The culture of this lovely rose;
What soil, attention, sun and shower
Are needed to produce a flower.

[*Enter hastily* **Mabel, Geraldine, Girls, Pilots, Gentlemen.** *The Girls are agitated.*]

GERALDINE

(*Excitedly, with maoy pauses for breath*)

I really don't know if I'm frightened or not.
Oh, my! Such a fiercely grotesque-looking lot!

ESTHER

Who?

GERALDINE

(*Pointing*)

Oh, some sailors—out there—such strange men!

RIVAL

(*Aside*)

My crew! They'll be ready for business when—

LEADER OF PILOTS

We were really afraid of them, they are so rough.

MABEL

I'm quite all a-tremble.

ESTHER

You silly!

[*A bugle call is heard.*]

TRUE

It's tough!

RIVAL

(*Aside*)

These fair ones some time on my gay ship shall spend;
But I'll carry my acting quite through to the end.

[*To* **Esther**:]

Ach! Meines leibschen, now must I go;
Of what I here feel, oh, so little you know!

[*He clasps his hands over his heart.*]

But you'll understand—ah, yes! You'll discern.
In war much may happen; but, if I return—

ESTHER

(*Gravely*)

If you return—

TRUE

Exactly. That's the way of war.
It may be that you'll see us here no more.

This Rival and myself, perhaps, may meet
In battle; then I'll run him through—

ESTHER

You're horrid! I repeat,
You're horrid!

RIVAL

Ach! I fear him not. And, after all,
It's most unlikely we shall meet.

[*He looks toward the place where the sailors were seen,*
Then masks a smile. The bugle call is heard again.]

TRUE

Hark! That's the final call.

CHORUS OF MEN

'Tis duty's call, and we must heed it,
Though but to do our bit and die.
The beast of war needs men to feed it—
'Tis ours to do, nor question why.
Give us your blessing. We shall need it
Out yonder where the wild shells fly.

And breathe a prayer—let Cupid speed it!
O maidens fair, good-bye. . . . Good-bye!

CHORUS OF GIRLS

When duty calls you, we must share it.
'Tis yours to go; 'tis yours to do;
'Tis ours to wait alone, and bear it,
As best we may, the long nights through;
To still the heart when doubt shall tear it;
To work and pray and watch for you—
Out yonder may the stars declare it!—
O warriors bold, adieu. . . . Adieu!

[*As the Girls are singing this, the Men march out,*
All humming as they go; and, as they disappear,
The Girls all kneel, with arms outstreached
Toward the departing ones, and softly, very softly,
Hum the sad refrain with which the act began.]

End of Act I.

ACT II

Some time has passed; but just how long
Can matter little to our song;
So what therein transpired we skip,
And come aboard the pirate ship
Of **Captain Kissem,** *"Social Whirl,"*
Which, well within the reefs and swirl
Of rougher waters that abound
The shores of Money Isle around,
Now comes to anchor, as the day,
Midst sombre shadows, glides away.
The **Crew** *are lowering a sail,*
That shows the marks of fight or gale,
Or both, perhaps, and needs repair.
They're casting anchor, and, with care,
About the deck, the while they sing,

Where it belongs they place each thing.
The **Captain** *struts about, meanwhile,*
With now and then a fleeting smile
Of satisfaction o'er some prize.
He pauses once or twice, and eyes
The shore, attentive to the scene,
Then sweeps the waters in between.
Now, with the coming of the night,
In Money Town appears a light,
And then another; then some more
Flash, one by one, from yonder shore.
And from the ship there can be seen,
Splashing the waves that intervene,
The gleaming glint and flickering glow,
Flashing, fading, to and fro,
Of a host of nimble fairy feet,
That trip the light fantastic toe
In a dance that only the fairies know.
And the gems on their toes, at each step, repeat
The fire that comes from the lights on shore,
And scatter it over the dancing-floor!]

CHORUS OF PIRATES

Ye-ho! Ye-ho! Ye-ho!
Let the halliards go!
The sail comes fluttering down.
Ye-ho! Ye-ho! Ye-ho!
The joy we soon shall know—
Out there in Money Town,
Ye-ho!

Ye-ho! Ye-ho! Ye-ho!—
Neptune is asleep,
So drop the anchor down.
Ye-ho! Ye-ho! Ye-ho!
To-night our watch we'll keep—
Out there in Money Town,
Ye-ho!

[*The ship in shape from stem to stern,*
The Crew now to the Captain turn.]

SONG—CAPTAIN KISSEM and CREW

Kissem.

What is the use of a life of toil,
When the world is full of riches?

Crew.

Why should we toil for riches?

Kissem.

Why should we spoil our clothes, and soil
Our hands in a nabob's ditches?

Crew.

Why should we work in ditches?

Kissem.

The cure for all ills
That oppression distills;
The magic,
Though tragic,
To pay all our bills,
To grant every craving just when we desire it,
To fill every need
With a wonderful speed—

Is the daring,
All-sharing,
No-work-for-me creed
Of the radical Bolshevik Pirate.

Crew.

The cure for all ills, etc.

Kissem.

Why should the man who possesses the brain
Be allowed to have the money?

Crew.

Why should brains have money?

Kissem.

Why should we strain, like bees, in vain,
While Wealth gets all the honey?

Crew.

Why should we gather honey?

Kissem.

Why should the fair ones smile on him
Who wears starched shirts and collars?

Crew.

Why do the girls love collars?

Kissem.

Why should he skim red lips, that brim
With sweets, because of dollars?

Crew.

Why the red lips for dollars?

All.

The cure for all ills, etc.

Kissem.

Aye, men,
A beautiful creed is the Bolshevik plan
Of running the world for the common man—
If you happen to be a pirate;
For then
The credulous crew of all work you imbue
With the notion of plenty-and-little-to-do,
And that only when they desire it.
You tell them they rule, and you promise them peace
When the nation owns all; and they follow like geese—
If you happen to be a pirate.

Crew.

You tell them they rule, etc.

Kissem.

And say!
The rich of their long-hoarded wealth you will strip,
And load it aboard of your new-fangled ship—
If you happen to be a pirate;
And they,
The wealthy, shall shed, if they wish to be fed,
All the indolent sloth of a soft, downy bed,
And work as *your* need may require it.
You capture the place of the overthrown lords,
And rule by the grace of the bamboozled hordes—
If you happen to be a pirate.

Crew.

You capture the place, etc.

First Pirate.

Oh, aye!
And we have adopted the Bolshevik way.

Second Pirate.

It works very well here on Sweetheart Bay.

All.

For we happen to be brave pirates.

First Pirate.

That's why
We captured the fair from the park over there.

Second Pirate.

And we stowed them aboard with a sedulous care.

All.

For we're strong and yet gentle pirates.

First Pirate.

Their fate they berate, with a bearing quite cold.

Kissem.

In a while they will smile on the love of the bold.

All.

And we happen to be bold pirates.

[*They tread the deck in dance grotesque—*
A sort of hornpipe humoresque,
Where touches of the Scalp-dance show,
Mixed up with Spanish Bolero.]

Crew.

The cure for all woes
That the sad lover knows;

The art
Of the heart,
And the way to propose;
The prize
Of bright eyes,
And the way to acquire it;
The wine of red lips, how to sip at your need—
All are told
In the bold,
Come-and-love-me-quick creed
Of the Bolshevik Sweetheart Bay Pirate.

[**Esther** *and* **Mabel** *and* **Geraldine,**
Sissy Pilots *and* **Girls** *invade the scene.*]

KISSEM

Ah, here they come, our string of pearls,
Our treasured, though disdainful, girls,
Fair trophies of our Bolshevism!

ESTHER

(*Ironically*)

Fine gentleman and brave are you;
Likewise your most attractive crew,
Most noble Captain Kissem!

FIRST PIRATE

(*Proudly, to his fellows of the crew*)

Our captain, Captain Kissem!

GIRLS

(*Chanting mockingly*)

O noble Captain Kissem!

SISSY PILOTS

(*In a sing-song manner*)

You and your unattractive crew,
Ignoble Captain Kissem!

FIRST PIRATE

O'er seas disturbed by female gales
He charts the course, we trim the sails,
And all the reefs, we miss 'em.

SECOND PIRATE

Within Love Harbor soon we swim—
That's why we have elected him
Our leader, Captain Kissem.

THIRD PIRATE

Our skillful Captain Kissem!

GIRLS

Most sinful Captain Kissem!

SISSY PILOTS

That's why they have elected him
To be their Captain Kissem.

KISSEM

As captain of this noble crew,
I'll tell you ladies what to do:
Wed us Bolshevistikly!

ESTHER

You mean, by that, that we should be
The common wives of these we see,
Loving communistically?

GIRLS

(*Shocked*)

Wed them communistically!

SISSY PILOTS

The common wives of these to be,
Married communistically!

FIRST PIRATE

What fairer can we pirates do
Than offer thus our hearts to you?
Accept us—we expect it.

SECOND PIRATE

'Tis one for all, and all for one—
That's how *this* social ship is run.
Think well, ere you reject it.

THIRD PIRATE

Beware, if you reject it!

GIRLS

We fear we must reject it.

SISSY PILOTS

That's how most every ship would run,
If pirates could direct it.

KISSEM

We would that your most alluring charms
Come, unreluctant, to our arms;
But should you choose to say us nay,
We'll find, be sure, another way.
Such marriage, though rare
In the tales that are told
Of the strict days of old,
Is legal and fair
In the days that unfold,
Like a scroll that's unrolled,
Where the radical, tragical,
Free-for-all, magical
Rule Bolshevistik is holding full sway.

GERALDINE

Such rule is for beasts and things that roll,
Fly, crawl or creep, but have no soul;

It should not, it shall *not* have a part
In the love affairs of the human heart!

KISSEM

(*With a quizical smile*)

And yet it does—you'll find it true;
And you'll come to terms. Girls always do,
When necessity calls and the way is plain!

MABEL

(*With a little sigh, regretfully*)

A man is a man, but too many's too much!
A man who's a *man*, I might love *one* such;
Whatever befalls, *more* woo in vain!

ESTHER

(*To* **Kissem**)

I'd like to hear, if you don't object,
Some details of yourself and crew,
That we may know what to expect—
Just what you are, and what you do.

SONG—CAPTAIN KISSEM and CHORUS

I am a pirate, strong and bold.
The ship I sail is made of gold,
  Captured from Beauty's tresses;
And, safely stored within the hold,
I keep, secure, a wealth untold,
  Hoarded from fair caresses!
Many a Ruby, rare, and Pearl,
Aboard the gay ship "Social Whirl,"
  Unto my fame have added;
And from the "Amathystine Girl"
The royal purple, quartz, and beryl,
  Coffers of mine have padded!

I'm at home in my gay ship sailing the bay,
  Or with love-seas rolling under;
And I steal from the fair the gold of their hair,
  And the ruby lips I plunder!
Oh, I capture delight from eyes that are bright,
  While the waist I securely infold!

I'm invincible quite, I conquer by might,
For I am a pirate bold!

Chorus.

He's at home in his gay ship, etc.

Over the waves of Sweetheart Bay
I set my sail, in quest of prey
Promising worthy plunder.
When I some argosy waylay,
And find a manikin in the way,
Pilot and craft I sunder!
When on the Sea of Love afloat,
I reckon not of crew or boat
Spoiling my speculation;
The fighting strength of both I note;
Then capture, and proceed to gloat
Over my peculation!

ENSEMBLE

Kissem.	**Crew.**	**Girls and Pilots.**
I'm at home, etc.	We're at, etc.	They're at, etc.

[*While singing this ensemble, each Pirate grabs a Girl,*
And swings his captive round the deck in a lively whirl.
The Sissies, brushed aside, now have no crafts to steer,
And, looking quite disconsolate, are huddled at the rear.]

KISSEM

(*After a pause*)

Well, pirates all,
It's time to call
On yonder Money Isle.
The nabobs there have settled down,
And sleep serene in Money Town.
In most approved Bolshevik style,
Relieve them of their hoarded wealth,
And bring it all aboard by stealth.
But little trouble you will find,
Because we've so cajoled the mind
Of Labor that his slaves believe
It's for the welfare of the State;
That each and all will soon receive
A share of what we *separate.*

Oh, they will blindly follow you,
And do just what you tell them to!

FIRST PIRATE

If any rich ones dare refuse
The contribution that *we* choose,
We'll call upon our husky Reds
To whack them on their stingy heads.

SECOND PIRATE

Their idle money we require,
To gratify an old desire.

KISSEM

Of what avail to lead the mob;
To be honest-to-no-one, dyed-in-the-wool
Bolshevik pirates, on the job;
To be masters of guile and slingers of *bull*,
Expert at all sorts of political *pull*;
Unless, by our methods of high finance,
We line our pockets, and have a chance
Of living well—oh, living high—
And *taking* all that we used to *buy*,

Without the need to build defences,
Like some blighted,
Poor, benighted
King of Dollars, against expenses?

[*With hustle and bustle, excepting just two*
And the **Captain,** *exeunt the* **Crew.**
They lustily sing, in a rythm quite gay,
A song, which dies out as the boat moves away.]

CREW

(*Off stage, singing*)

Ye-ho! Ye-ho! Ye-ho!
Let the long-boat down.
Ye-ho! Ye-ho! Ye-ho!
We're off to Money Town,
Ye-ho!

Ye-ho! Ye-ho! Ye-ho!
High-living costs are high;
In Money Town, ye-ho!
Our need we will supply,
Ye-ho!

KISSEM

(To the Girls)

Ladies, you had better go
And spend some time in sleep, below;
There's nothing like a good night's rest
To make fair maiden look her best.

[*Obediently the* **Girls** *go out;*
And, off stage, as they move about,
Laughter and prattle do not lack,
As told by voices drifting back.
But gradually these sounds die out,
And perfect silence reigns without.
Captain Kissem, *stroking chin*
Thoughtfully, meantime has been
Watching them—slantwize,
Out of the corners of his eyes.
And while is heard their talk and laughter,
Still his eyes have followed after;
But when these are no longer heard,
He nods and smiles, but speaks no word;

Yet, by a gesture, bids the two
Present members of his **Crew**
And **Sissy Pilots** *go away.*
They understand, and soon obey.
He casts a glance about, toward shore;
Then brings his gaze to rest, once more,
Toward the quarters of the fair,
For a moment dwelling there.
At length, as though his fancy's caught
The signal of some pleasant thought,
He softly laughs, begins to pace,
With a nonchalant and swaggering grace,
Across the deck, then back again,
While softly humming the refrain:
"I'm at home in my gay ship, sailing the bay."
Enter **Mabel,** *in pyjamas gay,*
With stealthy, hesitating mien.
She stops, turns back to edge of scene;
Then glides forward, half in fear,
As if scarce knowing why she's here.
The **Captain** *has his eyes away.*

He turns; and **Mabel,** *in dismay,*
Makes a sudden, rapid glide,
In a vain attempt to hide
Where the deeper shadows drip
From the structure of the ship.
But lacking confidence and poise,
In doing so she makes a noise.
The **Captain** *evidently hears.*
Alert at once, he keenly peers
About, and then, relaxing, grins,
As if a pleasing game begins.
At length he turns away once more,
Goes to the rail, observes the shore;
Then, o'er his shoulder with his thumb,
Beckons the hiding one to come.
But **Mabel,** *crouching, hesitating*
In the shadows, keeps him waiting.]

KISSEM

(*Gently*)

Come here. Why thus in shadows hide,

When I would have you by my side?

[**Mabel** *stirs, but hesitates.*]

KISSEM

(*More harshly, after a moment*)

Come here! Have you forsaken sleep
Merely in shadows thus to creep?

[*Now* **Captain Kissem** *turns about,*
Approaches her; and she steps out,
Half shyly, from her vain retreat.
Not yet her eyes his glances meet.]

MABEL

(*Stammeringly*)

W-why am I here? I—I scarcely know.

KISSEM

(*Sarcastically*)

Were you, then, walking in your sleep?

MABEL

(*Uneasily*)

Perhaps I was. I—I guess I'll go.

[*She starts to leave.*]

KISSEM

(With finality)

No! You'll remain.

MABEL

I—I can't explain—

KISSEM

I can. I understand.
You came because of my command.

MABEL

That—that can not be true.
I heard no such command from you.

KISSEM

Can speech alone convey desire?
Does wireless need connecting wire?
I called you by a subtler art,
That speaks direct from heart to heart.

MABEL

I did not know; I did not understand—
But oh, I felt so queer!

'Twas just as if some powerful, unseen hand,
Insistant, dragged me here.

KISSEM

Well, then, my dear, since you have heard
The call of my unspoken word,
Let sweet emotion now hold sway,
And I will kiss all doubts away,

[*He tries to kiss her; but, her eyes*
Lighting with a mock surprise,
She eludes him, glides away,
Half in earnest, half in play,]

DUET—MABEL and CAPTAIN KISSEM

Mabel. (*Coyly*)

Oh, Sir, what are you trying to do?
Stop, I say! Keep away! I'm afraid of you.
I have never been kissed by a man;
Though you're strong, you are wrong, if you think
that *you* can.

Kissem. (*Following*)

I tell you I carry through
What I attempt to do.

Mabel.

Keep away from me!

Kissem.

Oh, I guess I'll have success
In this kissing business.

Mabel.

Such a thing can never be.

Kissem.

By my sire! I acquire
Whatever I aspire to.

Mabel.

Not from me.

Kissem.

I shall sip from your lip
As much as I desire to.

Mabel.

We shall see.

[*He tries to catch her, but in vain;*
And yet he tries and tries again.]

Mabel. (*Laughing mockingly*)

Oh, ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho!
That's the time you missed;
I will not be kissed!
Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!

[*He catches her about the waist.*]

Mabel. (*With satisfaction*)

O-o-o-o-oh!
[*Aside*:[
Who'd have thought I'd like it so?
[*To him*:]
Let me go, I say!
Take your arm away!
Can't you plainly see
You are hurting me?

[*He eases his hold.*]

Mabel. (*With increased satisfaction*)

A—a—a—a—ah! O—o—o—o—oh!

[*Aside*:]

Hope he will not let me go!

[*Enter* **Sissy Pilots** *and* **Girls,** *in pyjamas.*]

Mabel.

U-u-u-u-um, u-u-u-u-um!
He will show to me
What a kiss should be.
U-u-u-u-um, u-u-u-u-um!
Something that I'd like
to know.

Kissem.

(*Together*)

I will teach
To you, my peach,
The gentle art of kissing.
If you ne'er
Had your share,
You know not what
you're missing.

Kissem. (*Kissing her lightly first on one cheek then on the other*)

[*Kiss, kiss.*] That's a society kiss.

Mabel.

Rather nice,
But like ice.
I would kiss
Like this. [*Smack!*]

Kissem.

[*Kiss, kiss.*] That is the kiss that a man
Gives the girl of his choice—on the lips, if he can.

CHORUS of GIRLS and SISSY PILOTS

(*Imitating Mabel and Kissem*)

Girls.	**Pilots.**
U-u-u-u-um, etc.	I will teach, etc.

[*Dance, after which exeunt* **Mabel** *and* **Girls.**]

KISSEM

(*After a pause, to Sissy Pilots*)

Begone! Don't linger here.

LEADER OF PILOTS

Please, Captain, don't be too severe.
In you we find a master hand,
  Who knows the best and surest way
These wilful fair ones to command,
  So that they must obey.

KISSEM

(*Flattered*)

Oh, that is done with greatest ease.
Just use some strength well mixed with guile—
A smile, a kiss, a lusty squeeze—
All done in forceful pirate style.
The ladies you can never please
By begging favor on your knees.

SISSY PILOTS

The ladies we can never please, etc.

LEADER OF PILOTS

We're pilots skilled; we know the bay;
Yet, somehow, fail the girls to sway.
The manly art we'd learn from you—
Pray, Captain, make us pirates, too.

SISSY PILOTS

The manly art we'd learn from you, etc.

KISSEM

You make me smile. I laugh at you.
Oh, what mighty deeds you'd do—

If you were members of my crew!
Ha-ha! Ha-ha! And would you, then,
Your prowess show
Where pirate flag unfurls?
Away! 'Twere false to call you men,
Who fawn and cringe,
Subservient to the girls!

[*The* **Sissies** *seem inclined to pout,*
And, much offended, straggle out.
Enter **Girls,** *in such attire*
As they've been able to acquire
By rummaging a chest or two
Belonging to the pirate crew.
In silence, and with eyes intent—
As if on daring action bent,
Result of conference profound—
Now the **Captain** *they surround.*]

KISSEM

Ladies, why this demonstration?

GERALDINE

You'll find it has a close relation
To your recent boasting.
We have heard and understood,
And have decided that we should
Provide you with a roasting.

GIRLS

Yes; we think 'twill do you good
To get a gentle toasting.

KISSEM

(*Scowling*)

What's this? A female insurrection?
Progressed so far without detection?

[*As the* **Girls** *are marching around,*
A rope appears; the **Captain's** *bound.*
To escape he vainly toils,
For he is helpless in its coils.
To celebrate their victory,
The Girls now dance about in glee.]

KISSEM

(*Somewhat subdued, to* **Mabel**)

My dear, pray tell me, without mincing,
What mean these efforts so convincing?
I know, of course, you've been conniving,
But fail to see at what you're driving.
This demonstration, so provoking,
Must be—but pshaw! you're only joking.

MABEL

(*Teasingly*)

Joking? No! We have decided
It's time we women take command.

[*Oratorically*:)

Too long our powers have been derided,
Too long vain man himself has prided
That his should be the ruling hand.

GIRLS

It's time we women take command, etc.

KISSEM

(*Struggling with his bonds*)

You certainly jest; for how can you hope
With masterful man in such manner to cope ?
Desist from your nonsense ! This cable unwind !

[*He pauses. The* **Girls** *pertly toss their heads*
And make emphatic gestures of refusal.
An angry, sneering smile o'erspreads
The **Captain's** *face, and tones suggestive*
Of a snarl are in his voice as he continues:]

If you're really in earnest, much trouble you'll find
In what you have started; you can't see it through.
Though me you have shackled, look out for my crew !

[**Sheckles,** *with blood-thirsty mien*
And limping stride, invades the scene.
He wears no coat; his head is bare;
His shirt and trousers show much wear.]

SHECKLES

(*To himself, as he enters*)

Well, those two are out the way !

Now this Captain I must slay,
And then—

ESTHER

(*Surprised*)

Why, Mr. Sheckles! Is it *you*?

GERALDINE

It surely is!

MABEL

How came you here?

A GIRL

Do you suppose he had to swim?

SHECKLES

Sheckles? Yes—what's left of him.

[*Pause, looking the Girls over.*]

I thought that I would find you here;
But what's afoot? Why dressed so queer?
I almost took you for the crew.

GERALDINE

(*Conscious of her clothes, but rather proud of them.*)

These garments? We pre-empted them

As raiment fit for tars *pro tem.*
We rule the ship from stem to stern.
The Captain's bound; the crew's away.
Before those pirates can return,
We'll be far out upon the bay.

KISSEM

(*Disgustedly*)

Fools!

ESTHER

How so?

KISSEM

(*Sneeringly*)

You're built to fly—
Girls naturally are aviators.

GERALDINE

(*With a toss of her head*)

Well, what of that?

KISSEM

You cannot ply
The seas; you are not navigators.

ESTHER

(*Pertly*)

You'll see.

KISSEM

(*Shaking his head*)

Rash maids!

MABEL

(*Daringly*)

We'll take the trip!

KISSEM

(*Positively*)

Without my aid, you'll sink the ship.

SHECKLES

(*Slowly and emphatically*)

That aid you'll give.

KISSEM

(*Explosively*)

No!

SHECKLES

(*Positively*)

Yes!

KISSEM

Never!

SHECKLES

Your pirate crew is gone forever.

KISSEM

What's that? *My* crew?

SHECKLES

(*Casually*)

In Money Town—

ESTHER

(*Expectantly*)

You bring good news?

KISSEM

(*Anxiously*)

What happened there?

SHECKLES

Those whom you duped with so much care
Have found you out, and cut them down.
[*Threatening*:]
If you would meet a similar fate—

MABEL

(*Impulsively*)

Oh, Mr. Sheckles, don't ! Please wait.

SHECKLES

(*Relaxing and smiling broadly*)

This fair one seems attached to you.
'Tis well, or I had run you through !
[*Indicating the Girls*:]
Against such as these it's vain to strive;
Be glad, Sir Captain, you're alive !

CHORUS OF GIRLS

(*Triumphantly, with mocking courtesy to the* **Captain**)

'Gainst such as we you vainly strive;
Be very glad that you're alive !

SONG—MR. SHECKLES and GIRLS

Sheckles.

The world may ignore or mistreat you;
Your sweetheart, love somebody else;
The one you should conquer may beat you,
And capture your wampum and pelts;

Your friends may cajole and deceive you;
Whatever's least wanted, arrive;
The thing you most cherish may leave you—
What's that, if you're only alive?

Let the world wiggle and waggle
And haggle and niggle and naggle,
While Time, with his hour-glass and scythe,
Numbers the minutes and reaps them,
Then into eternity sweeps them—
What's that, if you're only alive?

Girls.

Let the world wiggle, etc.

Sheckles.

Affairs that you think in a muddle
May seem to be rather than be;
The fin that's a shark in a puddle
Is a minnow, perhaps, in the sea.

All light may seem gone from the heavens,
Black darkness, in triumph, to thrive;
All things be at sixes and sevens—
What's that, if you're only alive?

Girls.

Let the world wiggle, etc.

[*While they sing the last refrain,*
Exeunt **Ladies,** *dragging with them*
Their reluctant captive—**Kissem.**
Esther *chooses to remain.*]

ESTHER

(*To* **Sheckles**)

What has transpired? Is the fighting quite through?
Tell me what's happened since last I saw you.

SHECKLES

The war is past; the fighting, done.
A mighty victory has been won.

ESTHER

What of our friends—what's been the cost?

SHECKLES

Some have returned—but some are lost.

ESTHER

(With more concern)

What of yourself? You limp, I see.
Have you met adversity?

SHECKLES

(Carelessly)

My wealth is gone. . . . Beyond recall. . . .
Those Bolshevists have got it all.
I went to war. . . . What more to tell?

ESTHER

(Solicitously)

Your lameness?

SHECKLES

Oh, a piece of shell.

[He pauses while his memory strays
The stirring scenes of recent days.
His changing countenance reveals
The pent emotion that he feels—

Now tense, now mild, as that which seems
To cross the vision of his dreams.
Then, soon, more pleasing thoughts beguile;
Upon his face appears a smile;
And, as the present he recalls,
His voice in softer cadence falls:]

'Tis nought. . . . My loss is gain;
For yonder on the bloody plain,
When night was come, I gazed afar,
Beheld your eyes in every star,
And by that vision fair I knew
An all-consuming love for you.

ESTHER

(*Happily*)

Ah! Do I dream? Or is it real?
Dear heart, you've caught the spark divine
To light the fire of love's appeal
Within this heart of mine.

[*He takes her hands in his. Their eyes*
Respond in mutual, glad surprise.]

SHECKLES

(*Rapturously*)

I'm filled with a wonderful, marvelous bliss!
No beauty of earth nor of star-lighted skies
Can fill with the thrill of a joy like this—
When I gaze, all amaze, in your love-lighted eyes!

DUET—ESTHER and SHECKLES

Sheckles.

I searched the earth for treasure,
The land and sea explored;
I called on Life to grant me
Some portion of her hoard;
I sailed the star-gemmed spaces
Of Hope's exalted flight;
I sounded deep, dark places
Of Disappointment's night.

And lo, behold, I've found it,
The thing I sought, the prize—
A gem beyond my dreaming—
I've found it in your eyes!

And there I read love's story,
  See love's fair promise rise
And glow in that rare glory—
  The star-light of your eyes!

Esther. (*With exaltation*)

Let earth, then, pay its tribute,
  Or still retain its gold;
Let Life grant many favors,
  Or pleasant smiles withold!
Could wealth give half the pleasure
  That we to-day attain?
True love's the greatest treasure
  That all the worlds contain!

Both.

Ah, yes; at last we've found it,
  The thing we sought, the prize—
The love-light softly gleaming
  Within each other's eyes!

And now we read love's story,
And, with a glad surprise,
Behold its richest glory
Within each other's eyes!

[*Enter* **Captain Kissem,** *who is no longer tied;*
And, walking quite sedately, is **Mabel** *by his side,*
Close followed by the **Girls,** *while* **Geraldine**
And **Sissies** *enter later on the scene.*]

SHECKLES

Ah, Captain, I perceive you've found
A way to get yourself unbound.

KISSEM

(*Grinning somewhat sheepishly*)

I learned that valor's better part
Would be to have a change of heart.

MABEL

(*Blushing*)

Except in one respect.

KISSEM

(*Gallantly, to* **Mabel**)

It's plain
To change complete I'll not attain
Since your mature, aluring charms
Have graced the refuge of my arms.

GERALDINE

He's sworn to abandon his pirate life,
And Mabel has promised to be his wife.

ESTHER

(*To* **Mabel**)

I'm *so* glad, dear. Is it true?

MABEL

Quite true.

SHECKLES

(*Shaking hands with* **Mabel** *and* **Kissem**)

Congratulations, then, are due.

ESTHER

(*To* **Kissem**)

I have no doubt your love will be
More true to her than it was to me.

KISSEM

To you?

ESTHER

To me.

KISSEM

Pray, when?

ESTHER

Some time ago.

KISSEM

You jest.

ESTHER

(*Teasingly*)

Think so?

KISSEM

Explain.

ESTHER

(*Shaking her finger at him*)

Ah, you I know.

KISSEM

Of course. You've learned to know me here.

ESTHER

As Captain Kissem, pirate, yes;
But you are not what you appear.
You're Carl, despite this pirate dress.

SHECKLES

What is this! Von Rival?

MABEL

(*Beaming on Kissem*)

They are the same.

ESTHER

(*To* **Mabel**)

Of course, *you* should know. But what's the game?
Which one *is* he of the two?
[*To* **Kissem**:]
Are you *him* or are you *you*?

KISSEM

(*Whimsically*)

I'm I. . . . Yet I was he. . . .
And, since this sudden change of heart,
The two, I think, are three. . . .

But who can tear himself apart?
Who analyze his inner soul?
Know all the parts that make the whole?
Or, knowing, see, with finite vision dim,
Which are himself, and which, not truly him?

[*He pauses, scowls, as one who seeks*
A truant thought. At length, he speaks:]

Well, after all, though mixed in mind,
To one conclusion I'm inclined:
I think we safely may surmise
That *Rival* was a mere disguise.

[*The* **Sissy Pilots** *and* **Miss Geraldine** *have been*
Lolling at the rear since they came in.
They're gazing, often, toward the shore,
As if it interests them more,
And with their mood's in more accord,
Than what is taking place on board.]

GERALDINE

(*Calling out to no one in particular*)

A boat! I see a boat!

SISSY PILOTS

(*Peering*)

It is! It's coming here!

GERALDINE

It's full of men.

[*All turn and gaze.*]

GIRLS

(*With suppressed excitement*)

The pirates?

SHECKLES

(*Reassuringly*)

Have no fear,

For these are friends.

ESTHER

I hope

You're right.

TRUE

(*Off stage, as from approaching boat*)

A-hoy! Ship a-hoy!

KISSEM

(*Answering*)

A-hoy, there!

[*To* **Sissy Pilots**:]

Go for'ard; catch the rope!

[*Exeunt* **Sissy Pilots.**]

GIRLS

(*Joyfully*)

We see them now.

ESTHER

One's Regie True.

GERALDINE

(*Impulsively*)

Oh, joy!

[*She blushes.*]

ESTHER

(*Turning quickly, to* **Geraldine**)

Can it be, my dear, that you
Are in love with Regie True?

[**Geraldine** *has nought to say,*

But, blushing deeper, turns away.
There is a pause wherein is heard
The sound of voices, but no word,
From off the stage. Then into view
Come **Sissies, Men** *and* **Regie True.**]

CHORUS OF GIRLS

(*Graciously*)

Welcome, welcome, gentlemen;
To our ship we welcome you.
'Tis a pleasure thus again
Former friendships to renew.

CHORUS—TRUE and MEN

(*Bowing*)

Ladies, all the pleasure's ours;
Just one thing that pleasure mars:
Girls in gowns possess some powers
Not retained when clad as tars.

CHORUS OF GIRLS

Gentlemen, we quite agree.
Garments donned to conquer foes

Are unfit for friends to see—
So we'll go and change our clothes.

[*Exeunt all* **Ladies.**]

TRUE

(*To* **Sheckles**)

Ah, Mr. Sheckles, don't you know,
It's good to see you smiling so.
What is it you're rejoicing o'er?
The ending of this beastly war?

SHECKLES

(*Confidingly*)

Well, yes, in part. . . . But I must own
My joy is not in that alone.
I've won the lady of my choice.

TRUE

(*Heartily*)

No wonder, then, that you rejoice!
Who is the fair one, may I ask,
In whose endearing smiles you bask?

SHECKLES

(*Hesitatingly*)

I fear 'twill be bad news to you—
I've won the girl you used to woo!

TRUE

Esther Darling?

SHECKLES

Yes.

TRUE

(*Beaming*)

I'm glad.

SHECKLES

(*Relieved*)

I feared the news might make you sad.

TRUE

(*Smiling reminiscently*)

Not at all; I'm relieved, don't you know,
For love, unrequited, soon ceases to grow.

SONG—MR. SHECKLES, Mr. TRUE and CHORUS of MEN

True.

Oh, true love is a rose
That eventually grows
And produces its quota of bloom
Only where it's unslighted,
Its fragrance requited
By the heart that receives its perfume.

Sheckles.

And the heart of a youth
Is a garden, forsooth,
And the smiles of a maiden are seeds;
Though the seeds germinate,
'Tis sad to relate,
They sometimes turn out to be weeds.

Chorus.

Oh, the heart of a youth, etc.

True.

When the day's work is done,
Of the ladies which one,

In your dreams, are you likely to see?
It's twenty to two
It's the girl who loves you,
Not the girl you expect it to be.

Sheckles.

Oh, a maid may be fair,
And her eyes and her hair
Make you think you're in love. You propose.
But you get no return,
And, at last, you discern—
It's a weed in your heart, not a rose!

Chorus.

Oh, a maid may be fair, etc.

[*Exeunt all but* **True.**]

TRUE

(*Going to edge of scene and calling softly*)

Geraldine! . . . . Geraldine!

[*Enter* **Geraldine,** *properly clad.*]

GERALDINE

(*As she enters, smiling roguishly*)

Calling me, Mr. True?

TRUE

(*Passionately*)

Geraldine, can't you see that I'm madly in love with you?

[*Enter* **Sheckles, Sissy Pilots** *and* **Men.**]

GERALDINE

(*In a low voice, glancing about*)

Are you quite sure I'm the one, Mr. True?

TRUE

[*Ignoring the presence of others*)

Sure as I'm sure, in this conflict of Mars,
Yours were the eyes that looked down from the stars,
Telling my heart that the love that it knew
Really was turning to, yearning for you.

[*Chattering, but self-possessed,*
Enter **Ladies,** *in their best.*
Ere their merry prattle cease,
Enter **Liberty** *and* **Peace.**]

ESTHER

(*To the Men*)

From Peace and Liberty, at last,
The chains of bondage have been cast.

PEACE

When strife is rife, when Fear's around,
Alas! we both are tightly bound.

LIBERTY

Nor can be seen by mortal eyes,
When hatred clouds love's azure skies.

ESTHER

So now we know the storm has cleared,
For in our midst they have appeared.

GERALDINE

(*To* **True,** *as if there had been no interruption*)

How can I know that you love me the best?
Love to another you've often professed.

[*The Girls and Men, now grouped in pairs,*
Are busy with their own affairs,

And but slight attention pay
To what these other lovers say.]

DUET—GERALDINE and TRUE

True. (*Indicating* **Peace** *and* **Liberty**)
If I had power to prevail
On these exalted ones to serve thee,
'Twould scarcely worthy be.
What would such a power avail?
'Twere nothing to the love I offer thee!

Geraldine. (*Playfully*)
If you such a thing could do,
Winning such service,
I'd be very nice to you—
Why not try?

True.
Ah, yes; I'd try all that and more—
I'd harness all the stars to draw thee,
To draw thy love to me;
I'd sail through space from shore to shore
To find the love that thou canst give to me!

Geraldine.

Don't you think that you might find
Sailing prevailing,
If you'd sail your ship-of-mind
Nearer home?

True. (*Holding out his hands to her*)

Come, sail with me upon Love's sea.

Geraldine. (*Half yielding*)

If I consent, where will you take me?

True.

Beyond the Honeymoon.

Geraldine. (*Taking his hands*)

You'll rig our ship with sails of faith?

True. (*Fondly*)

And with hope load it, if you'll sail with me.

Geraldine. (*Yielding to his embrace*)

Then I'll sail with thee.

Both.

On the Sea of Love we'll launch
Our Ship of Life, dear;
And true our course we'll steer,

That our craft, both fair and staunch,
May safely bear us. We'll nothing fear.
Floating past the Honeymoon,
Upon the Love Sea,
Our hearts are sure to be
In perfect tune.
Then, let us seek the Honeymoon!

CHORUS

On the Sea of Love we'll launch, etc.

LIBERTY

(*Holding up her torch*)

You all know that Cupid's throne
Depends on love, on love alone;
That Mars o'er Cupid shall prevail
When one generation fail,
Man and maid, to love and woo,
And, thus, the love-god's power renew.
But, now, his power will still endure,
On his throne he'll sit secure,

For a generation more,
Because you sail the Love Sea o'er.

PEACE

(*Holding out her arms in a gesture of benediction*)

And now, I, Peace, this blessing give:
May your love forever live;
May your vision ever be
From true hearts, that know to see
Those glories, from mere eyes concealed,
That are to love alone revealed!

CHORUS

From every clime and nation,
From high and lowly station,
We'll congregate to celebrate
Our fay's reinstallation.
With spirits gay, in joyful way,
Unto this most delightful fay
We'll render our ovation.
For though Sir Cupid's said to be
The god of love on land and sea,

He'd lose his high vocation,
And, as a god, would soon be through,
Unless he were installed anew
By each generation.
Each man and maid, within the heart,
Has felt the point of Cupid's dart,
And knows 'tis bad to live alone;
Therefore we mate, nor hesitate,
But gladly go to reinstate
Sir Cupid on his throne.
On the Sea of Love we'll launch
Our Ship of Life;
And true our course we'll steer,
That our craft, both fair and staunch,
May safely bear us. We'll nothing fear.
Floating past the Honeymoon,
Upon the Love Sea,
All hearts must surely be
In perfect tune.
Then, let us sail to Honeymoon!

The End.

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